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ABSTRACT

The paper analyzes the work roles of husbands and wives in the 1970s and suggests policies to implement sex equality in the workplace and at home. Data reviewed in the paper support the structural-cultural view that work behavior both inside and outside the home is shaped by deeply embedded cultural and structural forces. In 1975, 41% of families in a national survey reported that both spouses were working. Wives' contributions to the economic welfare of families was significant: in 1975, the median proportion of income contributed by the wife was 26%. However, the types of jobs held by most women were sex-linked, requiring sociability, nurturance, or other "female" characteristics. In terms of dividing housework, data show that although husbands do a substantial amount of work in the home, tasks are still divided along traditional lines. Even when fully employed, wives bear home and family care responsibilities. Women's attitudes toward family and work roles seem to be less traditional as their educational and employment experience increase. Social policy goals to achieve sex equality must include restructuring the labor force, transforming part-time work to more meaningful employment, compensating for work at home, and increasing child support and day care programs. (Author/AV)

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THE NEW FAMILY EQUALITY: MYTH OR REALITY?*

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Paper presented at the annual meetings of the American Sociological Association, September 8, 1977.

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Dramatic changes are occurring in family work roles. The number of wives in the labor force, the particularly sharp increases in the employment of mothers, the decline in fertility and the drop in men's age of retirement all signal a new equality in the division of labor in families. No doubt the pace and importance of these changes contribute to the growing concern about what is happening to the family. Is sex equality creating new problems for the family? How are home responsibilities divided now that women have a new role in the labor force? Who is caring for children now that husbands and wives are both employed outside the home? How are family resources divided in the event of divorce? Recently policy makers have turned attention to these and the whole set of issues surrounding the family in modern society. For example, Vice President Walter Mondale has called for the creation of a national family policy. And the White House has convened a Conference on Families to be held in 1979. In sum, present conditions provide an impetus for an assessment of sex equality and the family. This huge task requires a comprehensive examination of family roles, an evaluation of the social consequences of present policy and the development of programs for the future. Within such a framework the plan of this paper is modest. First, it considers the work roles (both inside and outside the home) of husbands and wives in the 1970s and then the costs of the present allocation of work in families. Finally the paper suggests some policies to implement sex equality.

Discussion of equality of family roles is shaped by two views, the economic and the structural-cultural. The former assumes that the allocation of work in families is governed entirely by economic or pragmatic concerns. The classic statement of the economic approach in the sociological literature is Blood and Wolfe's Husbands and Wives (1960). It reasoned that equalitaraian

beliefs had already replaced the traditional ideology of sex inequality. By this argument, whatever differences remain in the roles of husbands and wives they are based merely on a rational allocation allocation of time and skills. If wives are not employed as fully as their husbands, it is only because women are more skillful in housework. If husbands do less work in the home, it is only because they have less time and higher earnings. A similar argument has been offered by Gary Becker and other economists who treat the wage differences between men and women as given and analyze how this determines marriage, the allocation of housework, labor force participation and fertility. In criticizing the work of these theorists from another economic perspective, Isabel Sawhill (1977) points out this model can only "describe the status quo in a society where sex roles are 'givens'--defined by culture, biology, or other factors not specified in the economic model" (1977:120). Because the economic view does not consider structural factors which are not economic or cultural forces affecting sex differences, it suggests that equality between the sexes will be achieved as women's education and employment levels are raised or in a more sophisticated version as women and men are paid equally for equal work. Accordingly, sex roles will be equal within a few generations as part of the natural evolution of current trends.

Others take a more complex view (Coser and Coser, 1970; Epstein, 1971; Glazer, 1976; Sawhill, 1973). In addition to economic or pragmatic constraints, they see the division of labor in families as shaped by underlying structural and cultural forces. They argue that cultural conditioning, beginning very early in life and continuing through the life cycle, makes the interests and training of men and women so distinct that the job-preparation and career interests of the sexes are very different. Additionally, employers

perceive women as a risk and exclude them from high level jobs. That this perception is often erroneous does not matter; the effect is the same as if it were true. In turn women, limited in their participation in the labor force, then invest their time and energies in the family. By doing so, they complete, as the Cosers put it, the self-fulfilling prophecy that women have a higher emotional involvement in the family. Since this structural-cultural view points to the deeply rooted origins of behavior and attitudes surrounding sex roles, it predicts that change in family roles will be very slow, and full equality can be achieved only by concerted efforts to change attitudes and to make employment opportunities and earnings equal for men and women.

The data reviewed in this paper support the structural-cultural view. They show that wives now have an important wage earning role. Nevertheless work behavior both inside and outside the home is shaped by deeply embedded cultural and structural forces. Additionally, information on attitudes shows that the traditional division of work is supported by deeply ingrained beliefs about the distinctions between the sexes.

Unless otherwise specified, the statistics introduced throughout this paper refer only to married women whose husbands are present, to married men whose wives are present, or to families with both a husband and a wife. These data, based on large national surveys, bring a new dimension to the study of the work patterns of husbands and wives for the pertinent sociological literature usually treats such comparisons in small localized samples of families.

Earning a Living

Differences in the wage-earning role of husbands and wives may be due to the rational workings of the marketplace (wives work fewer hours and have

higher turnover because of family demands), to more complicated structural and cultural factors, or to some combination of both. As a first step in understanding the alternative explanations, consider the facts about the roles of husbands and wives in the labor force.

The husband as breadwinner and the wife as full-time homemaker is no longer the typical pattern in American marriage. It applied to only 34 percent of husband and wife families in 1975 (Hayghe, 1976:16). Both spouses were employed in 41 percent of families and in another three percent only the wife was employed. The latter condition usually reflected a retired husband. Altogether 44 percent of married women were employed in contrast to 83 percent of married men. While increasing proportions of wives are in the labor force, the opposite trend is occurring for husbands, in great part due to earlier retirement. As a result, the gap in the market role of husbands and wives is narrowing.

For both employed husbands and wives the attachment to the labor force is usually full-time and full-year. Although a higher proportion of employed husbands worked full-time in 1975 (96 percent), nearly three-fourths of employed wives had full-time jobs (Department of Labor, 1975a:A-15). Even with preschool children two-thirds of the employed mothers worked full-time (Department of Labor, 1975a:A-18). Of the employed wives 62 percent worked 50 to 52 weeks in 1975 and the comparable figure for husbands was 89 percent. To some degree the difference between husbands and wives in attachment to the labor force was due to the wife's responsibilities in the home. While 43 percent of women gave home responsibilities as a reason for part year work, home respnsibilities were mentioned by only one percent of men (Department of Labor, 1976b:24).

Today employed wives make an important contribution to the economic

welfare of families. In 1975 the median proportion of income contributed by the wife was a sizeable 26 percent (Department of Labor, 1975b:A-30). However as Carolyn Shaw Bell points out, an average conceals the full impact of the wife's contribution. First, some families depend substantially on the wife's earnings. While it is true that the proportion of wives who contribute over one half of family income is only 12 percent, in numbers this reflects nearly three million women. To the families of these women, usually at the lower income levels, the earnings are vital. Second, the earnings of wives make an important contribution to raising the family's standard of living: "Between 1950 and 1974, median annual income (adjusted for inflation) of families more than doubled when the wife was in the paid labor force and rose by four-fifths when she was not" (Hayghe, 1976:15). Third, when wives are employed full-time and full-year, they contribute considerably more than one-quarter of family income. In 1975, 41 percent of the wives in the labor force were fully and steadily employed, and they provided 39 percent of family income (Department of Labor, 1975b:A-30; Department of Labor, 1976b:21).

The contribution married women make to family income becomes more impressive when it is recognized that their earnings are lower than married men's. A detailed breakdown of earnings reveals that 55 percent of employed wives earn less than $5,500 a year while only 15 percent of husbands earn so little (Bureau of Census, 1977:116). At the other end of the income hierarchy as few as two percent of wives have a yearly income over $15,000 in comparison to 32 percent of employed husbands.

Are wives' earnings lower than husbands' because they are not fully or steadily employed? According to measures of differential participation and the wage earning role of wives, to some degree, this is true. More

detailed analysis reveals, however, that other factors are also important. To begin with, wives' lesser attachment to the labor force is not rooted in family responsibilities alone. For example, data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics tell us that a substantial number of wives who are usually employed part-time would prefer full time work. In 1974, 27 percent of all wives employed part-time were doing so because of lay-offs, short workweeks and an inability to find full time jobs (Department of Labor: 1976a:81). The comparable figure for husbands was 14 percent.

Nor is part-year work entirely a matter of preference or family responsibilities. Generally turnover rates are higher in low-level occupations. With little pay, interest or opportunity for advancement there is less incentive to stay on a job. Specifically, in 1971 full year employment was true of 77 percent of professionally employed wives, 65 percent of wives in clerical and sales occupations, and a little over 50 percent of the wives who worked in crafts and operatives and in service jobs (Bureau of Census, 1972: Table 68). On the average, low level occupations figure more heavily in the work experience of women than of men. Thus when turnover rates are compared for men and women in similar jobs, the differentials are greatly reduced (Department of Labor, 1972:269; Bergman and Adelman, 1973:511; Sawhill, 1973:393).

Furthermore differences in income between husbands and wives are not entirely due to the lesser participation of wives. Single women tend to work longer hours and more continuously than married women, but their earnings are still lower than men's. Although adjustments for participation, experience and marital status reduce the earnings differential between men and women, a wide gap remains unexplained (cf. Suter and Miller, 1973; Fuchs, 1971 and 1974).

Other data suggest that structural and cultural factors underlie the differential earnings of husbands and wives. Consider the segregation of

occupations by sex. When earnings are adjusted for occupational differences, the gap between the sexes is almost removed (cf. Bergman and Adelman, 1973; Fuchs, 1971; Kohen, 1975; Sanborn, 1964; Sawhill, 1973). As recently as 1970, 73 percent of all female workers were in occupations where women were grossly over-represented, that is, they accounted for 45-100 percent of the workers in the particular jobs. The figure was virtually identical ten years earlier--72 percent (Bergman and Adelman, 1973: 511). Although some women entered male occupations in the 1960s, these gains were neutralized, for the largest employment gains for women were in occupations which were predominantly female. Nevertheless between 1962 and 1974 women did make slight gains in employment in certain predominantly male professional and service occupations (Garfinkle, 1975: 27).

Women's jobs in the labor force are an extension of the tasks they perform in the home. Jobs with a high proportion of female workers typically require charm, sociability, nurturance or other characteristics which are believed to be sex-linked. They are seldom supervisory positions, least of all over men. They include the lower level professions such as nursing and teaching, clerical occupations, private household work, operative work in the clothing and textile industries and certain kinds of service occupations such as waitresses, practical nurses and attendants (Oppenheimer, 1975). Furthermore as Oppenheimer (1975) and Sawhill (1973) have shown, female jobs require little on the job training and in turn provide little opportunity for advancement. In other words, the meaning of job experience is very different for men and women. Even with continuous employment, women have considerably less opportunity for advancement than the average male worker.

In sum, occupational segregation is a primary factor in the earnings gap between husbands and wives although differential participation and wage

discrimination (unequal pay for equal work) are also important. As Isabel Sawhill observes, factors such as these make the "crucial difference larger than it otherwise would be" (1973:394). But important questions about occupational segregation still remain unexplained. Clearly its roots include such diverse phenomena as early socialization and discrimination by employers, but the exact contribution of each factor is not fully understood.

Taken together, these statistics reveal that while wives have an important role in the labor force, it is still limited by tradition. This occurs because home responsibilities limit wives' participation, but also because deeply rooted conditions place men and women in different jobs.

Dividing Housework

In housework as in wage-earning, there are signs of important change. In itself the labor force participation of wives and mothers indicates that the demands of housework are not what they once were. Moreover technology has revolutionized home and family care. Many tasks are now as simple as pushing a button or opening a package. Not only do labor-saving devices conserve time and energy but by mechanizing tasks, they may make housework more acceptable to men. Is the division of housework now shaped by pragmatic factors, such as the availability of time and personal skills? Do deeply ingrained beliefs about the roles of the sexes also operate in this area? Or do both factors apply, and if so how do they sustain one another? The findings here complement those concerning the division of market work: while husbands do a substantial amount of work in the home, tasks are still divided along traditional lines with wives, even when employed bearing primary responsibility for home and family care.

Most information on the household contribution of husbands and wives is based on questions asking who typically performs a sampling of tasks.

Such data cannot, however, tell us how labor in the home is routinely divided. Nor can it tell the amount of housework contributed by each spouse. Time budget studies, in which respondents report--activity by activity--what they do for an entire day, are a more valid measure. The available time-budget studies are, however, less recent than one would like. The two studies reviewed here date to the latter half of the 1960s. Specifically I will refer to my calculations of the Robinson-Converse 1965-66 national survey (Vanek, in progress) and Kathryn Walker's 1967-68 survey of 1300 families in upstate New York (Walker and Woods, 1976). Two recent studies provide additional information. One, a 1974 study in Evanston, Illinois, treats not the time in tasks but who bears primary responsibility for various household tasks (cf. Berheide et al., 1976: 504). The other, a 1975 national time use survey, provides at this writing only preliminary estimates.[1]

Is housework shared today? Both of the studies conducted in the 1960's show that husbands do a substantial amount of work in the home, a total of 11 and a half hours a week. However a detailed examination of what is done reveals that household tasks are sharply divided by sex. Men's work clusters in only a few activities: yard work, home repairs, shopping, travel on household errands and to a limited degree child care. The wife is still responsible for routine home and family care which includes such tasks as meal preparation and clean-up, home care, laundry, mending and care of children. Only shopping and travel on household errands are divided at all equally. Even child care duties, shared to some degree, are typed

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[1]F. Thomas Juster and John Robinson, Time Use and Household Production. Survey Research Center (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 1975-76). This study follows, although with considerable change, the John Robinson and Philip Converse, United States Time Use Survey. Survey Research Center (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 1965-66).

by sex. The detailed time budget figures show that wives perform almost all of the physical care activities such as diapering, bathing and feeding.

The sex-typing of housework is so deeply ingrained that the basic household tasks are not redivided when a wife enters the labor force. As a result there are significant differences in the total workweek of husbands and wives. Married women who are not employed spend the least amount of time in work (about 56 hours a week); employed married men about six and a half additional hours a week (a total of 62.5 hours); while employed wives work about eight and a half hours longer than married men (71 hours). For employed mothers of young children, work expands to an 80 hour week, but for husbands in such families it increases by a mere two or three hours to 65 hours (Vanek, in progress: Chapter 5).

Essentially the same picture of the division of household work emerges from the recent studies. The 1974 research shows that between 80 and 95 percent of household tasks are done by women. Furthermore married employed women typically do the same proportion of household tasks as nonemployed wives (Berheide et al., 1976: 504). The 1975 time use survey also shows that the division of household work is far from equal. Women still bear primary responsibility for housework. The hours husbands spend in housework respond neither to a wife's employment or to the presence or age of children.

What determines the division of labor and why has it been so resistant to change? Pragmatic factors have some role. Wives' longer hours of housework can be interpreted as their compensation for lower wages in the marketplace, that is, because they earn less outside the home, they contribute more work inside the home. But by itself this interpretation explains neither why nonemployed wives work as long as they do or why the sex typing of jobs remains so deeply ingrained even when wives are employed.

Perhaps a wife feels she must spend a great deal of time working in the home to equalize her role in the marriage partnership. In her eyes the investment may be threatened if her husband takes on anything but a narrow range of tasks in the home. Furthermore men, typically have little experience or interest in the "feminine tasks," perform them begrudgingly or ineptly which of course reinforces the traditional pattern. It may simply be easier for wives to do things themselves. Indeed, this reasoning is supported by findings, reported in the next section, which show that wives don't want their husbands to share housework.

Attitudes and Family and Work Roles

In their second study of Middletown, the Lynds (1937) were impressed by how little change had occurred in attitudes about women's role in the home. Although the employment of wives increased in the decade since their first study, people still believed that women should be at home. According to the Lynds, wives entered the labor force in response to the pressures of a rising standard of living rather than disinterest in the family. Changes in family roles were proceeding, as they put it, in a "devious way," as merely an incidental response to the quest for more income rather than by an underlying shift in beliefs about family life (1937:181). The Lynds' description of the way family roles change remains surprisingly accurate. Although there is every appearance of change today, the patterning of work in the home and in the labor force continues to reflect deep cultural beliefs about the duties and responsibilities of the sexes. As the Lynds observed, change in employment and family roles has not proceeded from diminished support for traditional values. Rather cultural support for the employment of wives has lagged behind actual participation in the labor force. Still slower to change are attitudes about equality of roles in the home.

Today scarcely a majority of the American public sees the sharing of work in marriage as an ideal. Recent Roper Poll data show that 50 percent of women and 48 percent of men feel that the most satisfying and interesting way of life is "traditional marriage with the husband assuming the responsibility for providing for the family and the wife running the house and taking care of children" (Roper, 1974:31). Women's responses are only slightly more equalitarian than men's. Although the young are less traditional than others, they are more conservative than one might expect given the wave of media publicity, for their preferences refer to sharing "more" than in traditional marriage, not to an equal sharing of home and wage-earning responsibilities. Still only 61 percent of women aged 18 to 29 and 51 percent of young men approved of this limited equality in marriage.

To disentangle beliefs about the various components of the new equality in marriage, consider attitudes concerning married women's work in the labor force. The Gallop Poll shows that 70 percent of the population now approves of a "married woman earning money in business or industry if she has a husband capable of supporting her" (Greene, 1976: 35). There is little difference between the sexes, and approval increases to 80 percent of both men and women who are younger than 30. Yet when questions about employment refer to mothers, attitudes become overwhelmingly conservative even among the young. When respondents in a 1968 Labor Department survey, commonly called the Parnes Study, were asked how they felt about mothers with children between six and twelve years of age taking a full-time job outside the home, only 22 percent of the sample expressed a permissive view (Department of Labor, 1970:46). That these responses were not correlated to age or to presence of children suggests how fundamental this belief is. Although many of the respondents were employed mothers they

had not rationalized their work outside the home. Nonetheless, I expect support for employed mothers to increase as more of them enter the labor force. A finding of Mason and her colleagues justifies this expectation (1976). Their analysis shows a sharp drop occurred between 1964 and 1974 in the belief that children suffer by a mother's employment.

Nonetheless most wives still see housework and family care as their responsibility, not as tasks to be shared with their husbands. My analysis of national survey data for 1965-66 found that as many as 84 percent of nonemployed and 70 percent of employed wives wanted no additional "help" from their husbands even though they reported receiving only two or three hours of assistance. This intriguing finding testifies to the depth of traditional beliefs. Indeed even the conventional phrasing of the question, referring to the amount of "help" reflects the belief that housework is women's responsibility. However beliefs may now be changing. A comparison of a 1970 and a 1974 study reveals a sharp increase in the number of wives who endorsed a sharing of cooking, cleaning and other household tasks with their husbands (Mason et al., 1976). Furthermore a 1976 Gallop survey found that half of the males interviewed believed that husbands should do as much housework and child care as their wives, if wives were employed (Hunt, 1976).

The current decline in traditional beliefs about sex equality parallels the rise of the so called "Women's Liberation Movement." However what is commonly perceived as a unified movement to liberate women is in fact far more complicated. In fact, it is not strictly a movement but diverse efforts directed at often competing goals. These efforts may not, in themselves, be a cause of change but a reflection of women's rising status. Whatever role the women's liberation movement might have in changing attitudes, it is not simple. For example Mason and her colleagues suggest that if the

movement had a "unique influence" on sex role ideology, attitudinal change would be much greater after 1970 when women's liberation attracted more attention and publicity than before. However, their data do not show a sharp increase in support for sex equality after 1970; attitudinal change proceeded at a steady pace between 1964 and 1974.

What then explains the recent change in attitudes? Mason and colleagues (1976) and the Parnes Study (Department of Labor, 1970) found that attitudes were much less traditional among women with higher education and recent experience in employment. Age itself was not significantly correlated with attitudes. Instead the expression of more liberated attitudes among the young was found to be a reflection of their higher rates of employment and education. More generally attitude change is no doubt tied to the changing composition of the population with respect to education and employment. The women's liberation movement may then provide ideological justification for this change.

Coupled with other factors, the increased education and employment of women should encourage more support for sex equality in the future. Of course one cannot rule out the possibility that trends may reverse, but evidence of this is very weak. Reviewing recent fertility change, two demographers, predicted a substantial upturn in fertility (Sklar and Berkov, 1975). In fact in recent years national statistics show an upturn in fertility. But the consensus among demographers seems to be that a substantial increase in fertility is unlikely (cf. Gibson, 1977; Reinhold, 1977). Since marriage and fertility are tied to economic conditions, it would take a significant upturn in the economy to bring a sharp increase in trends in family formation. Furthermore later marriage, the availability of cheap effective contraception, women's increasing wages, and growing interests--

all suggest that fertility will be low in the future.

Sex Equality, the Family and Social Policy

When Richard Nixon vetoed the Child Development Bill of 1969, he warned that federal provision of services will lead to "collectivization" of child rearing and the demise of the family (Bane, 1976:115). Nixon expressed the widespread belief that programs to implement sex equality will damage the already fragile family. Such a position, however, neglects to recognize the great costs that are present in the current patterning of family roles.

Husbands and wives work outside the home to earn income and also as Bergman and Adelman argue, "for greater autonomy in spending, for status inside and outside the family, to occupy themselves in an interesting way, to meet people, to have the excitement of being in a contest for advancement, to reduce the amount of housework they do, and to get away from spending all day with the children" (1973:512). However the jobs women hold are less satisfactory in meeting these needs than men's jobs. Nevertheless women find even these jobs more satisfying than working only at home. My calculations of data from a national survey (1976) and Myra Ferree's research (1976) on working class wives both show that wives are more satisfied with their work outside than inside the home. Furthermore Jessie Bernard's review of research findings shows that the mental and emotional health of married women is poorer than that of single women (1972). Anxiety, depression, neuroses--in short the housewife syndrome--are not infrequent among women who try to find fulfillment only in full-time housework and child care.

There are also costs in the husband's role in marriage. As long as the major economic responsibility for the family rests on the husband, he must devote most of his day to a job that is often boring, routinized, and

even physically debilitating. The standards by which his contribution to the family are measured are occupational success and high earnings, scarce resources which few can achieve. A telling sign of the costs of the male role is lower life-expectancy.

Nor can the present situation be justified by the needs of children. As Alice Rossi points out, it is paradoxical that motherhood became a full time job for the first time in the modern family. In the past housework was so burdensome that women had little time to spend with their children. Rossi believes that the full-time mother tends to create an unhealthy environment for the child's development and makes a lasting mark on the adult personality: "In myriad ways the mother binds the child to her, dampening his initiative, resenting his growing independence in adolescence, creating a subtle dependence which makes it difficult for the child to achieve full adult stature without a rebellion which leaves him with a mixture of resentment and guilt that torment him in his mother's declining years" (1973:151).

As divorce increases, another cost of traditional sex roles becomes a pressing social problem. Currently women and children bear a disproportionate cost of divorce. Reviewing evidence from a national survey over the period 1967 to 1975, Mary Jo Bane provides data on this problem (1976:132-33):

> The women who did not remarry had an average real income drop of 29.3 percent, while the income of the men who did not remarry dropped 19.2 percent. Since the women's incomes usually had to support more people than the men's, the differences in the ratio of income to needs were more dramatic. For the women, the ratio of income to needs dropped 6.7 percent after the separation, while that of the men rose 30 percent

Many of the nation's children are now economically deprived. In 1974, 51 percent of children under 18 in female-headed families were living in poverty

(Bane, 1976:118).

The personal costs created by the present patterning of family roles tell us that providing for sex equality and for the welfare of family members need not be competing goals. A national policy to advance both objectives would center in three main areas: 1) equalizing pay and employment opportunities for men and women, 2) compensating the market-dependent spouse, and 2) providing for the needs of children.

Achieving equal pay and employment for men and women requires a comprehensive restructuring of the labor force. With general unemployment averaging six to eight percent, women cannot take a new role in the labor force without taking jobs away from already employed men. Equal employment depends on the creation of new jobs, in brief implementing full employment.

The strategy to equalize employment must also include the transformation of part-time work to permit men and women to combine meaningful employment with family life or with the pursuit of other interests. Although a highly educated population demands challenging work, the economy demands great numbers of people take low level or heavily routinized jobs. One solution to the problem of an "over-educated" population is to reduce hours on the job to allow people to develop other interests including spending time with the family. Although part-time employment is currently increasing, the jobs are typically low-level and offer only a minimum wage and few fringe benefits. The restructuring of part time employment should include: 1) the creation of new jobs, 2) increasing compensation and benefits and 3) extending part-time work throughout the occupational structure to high-level as well as low-level jobs. There is no reason, at least from the point of productivity or efficiency, that would prevent such a policy, for it is a well documented fact that productivity drops after four or five

hours of work. Furthermore it is not sufficient to find new jobs for women if the jobs are similar to those of the past. Job segregation and pay differentials must be eliminated by concerted efforts to enforce equal pay and hiring.

If these policies were implemented, the economic roles of husbands and wives would be very different than they are today. Husbands and wives would be represented in occupations in proporcion to their participation in the labor force, a major step needed to equalize earnings. Eliminating the earnings gap would mean that wives would be as likely as husbands to be the higher earner.

Policy must also be directed to improving the economic position of the spouse who primarily engages in work in the home. I used the term "spouse" because sex equality requires that this role be distributed randomly to men and women. This may take even longer than changes in the labor force, and as Rossi argues, will be impossible unless generations of males and females are given compensatory training. Since married women will be doing more work in the home than married men for many years to come, programs are now needed to improve the economic status of the housewife. First, social security payments, health and retirement insurance, the basic benefits which normally accrue to workers, should be extended to housewives. The National Organization of Women also proposes divorce insurance and retraining programs to remove present inequities (cf. Johnson, 1975).

Equality also requires a tangible compensation for working in the home. However those in agreement about this need debate about specific programs. Conflict centers on the difficulty in setting a monetary value on housework and on whether compensating the market-dependent spouse is the responsibility of society or the employed spouse. The National Organization of Women proposes the assignment of one-half of the employed spouse's income

to the household spouse. (This of course keeps the responsibility in the family.) Recognizing the difficulties inherent in setting a wage rate for housewives, Shirley Johnson (1975:419) has argued that this would be the most realistic proposal. The visible assignment of earnings would signify that both spouses decided one should remain at home and that benefits accrue to all family members from the additional time devoted to nonmarket work. Juanita Kreps, however, suggests evaluation of the housewife's earnings on the basis of the minimum wage and calculations of opportunity costs (1971: Chapter 4), in this way providing a basis for governmental payment to the household spouse. Provisions for fringe benefits and compensation for work in the home will clearly not eliminate the inferior economic position of the household-spouse, but it should lessen present economic inequities and bring more psychic satisfaction.

Third, programs must provide for child welfare in areas where in the past government and collective responsibility were minimal, namely child support and day care. Both provisions are necessary to implement sex equality. Equally important, they are mandated by the needs of children. Child welfare can no longer depend on whether individual families are able to support children. The figures quoted earlier on the numbers of the nation's children living in poverty are a striking reason for child-payments by the government. The current emphasis on enforcing payments from delinquent or run-away fathers may be a first step, but unfortunately, by concentrating efforts on this problem, attention is diverted from more important matters. How many fathers are ordered by the court to make support payments? Is the amount of payment sufficient for a child's needs? According to one estimate, only 41 percent of divorced or separated women who have been divorced or separated within the previous seven years, were receiving alimony or child

support and the yearly payment averaged a mere $2000 (Bane, 1976:93). However the most important issue is whether fathers can provide more? In fact most fathers cannot. A man earning $10,000 is at the national income average, but these earnings cannot support two households.

The deficiencies of the United States in providing for child welfare become even more glaring when it is recognized, as Bronfenbrenner notes, that this is the only industrialized nation which does not insure a minimum income for every family with young children (1977b:11). Certain societies even extend payments for children, analagous to social security, to all families. At the very least, the United States should make child support payments available to single-parent families since children in these families represent a substantial and growing proportion of the nation's population who are living in poverty.

New programs must also be developed around day care. In the United States day care has been looked on as both custodial care and a last resort. Either because of the belief that children should be cared for at home or because of inadequate facilities, American families have made little use of day care (Woolsey, 1977). Now, however, family experts are stressing the positive opportunities provided by day care (cf. Hymes, 1973; Roby, 1973). Contact with peers and trained personnel are important to the child's development. In fact, as Rossi reminds us (1977:23), day care represents a "shifting back to a more natural way of life," since in the past children grew up in larger, less isolated families. Public acceptance of day care seems to be growing. One indication is the success of private day care chains (Lelyveld, 1977). Drawing on the mass appeal of fast food chains, these facilities are located in shopping centers and are provided with only minimal staff and resources. The use of such primitive services points

to the new need for expanded and better child care services.

National policy has ignored family needs. As a political issue, the family and child welfare have been relegated to secondary concerns, and this is justified by the sanctity and privacy of family life. Both government and the public have feared that new programs would intrude on the family. However conditions in modern life make programs to implement sex equality and provide for the welfare of family members a pressing national need. The programs advocated here should allay fears that government efforts to assist families and implement sex equality will destroy family freedom. In fact such efforts will provide more options than are now available since husbands and wives would be able to choose more realistically about employment, family demands or ending an intolerable marriage. In particular, the improvement in the economic position of women will probably result in a reduction in childbearing and in marriage. However the result of these programs should also be improvements in the quality of life of children and in the relations of husbands and wives.

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